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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 000934

SIPDIS

NSC STAFF FOR KUMAR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/26/2029

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: AYMAN NOUR INJURED BY UNIDENTIFIED ASSAILANT

REF: A. CAIRO 300
[¶](#)B. CAIRO 393
[¶](#)C. 08 CAIRO 2339

Classified By: Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs
Catherine Hill-Herndon for reason 1.4 (d).

[¶](#)1. Key Points:

-- (U) On May 23, an unidentified assailant attacked opposition politician Ayman Nour, released from prison in February (ref A and B), with flames from an ignited aerosol can.

-- (U) Nour, who on May 21 announced his intention to run for president in 2011, suffered first degree burn on his face and scalp, and has canceled public appearances for the next three weeks.

[¶](#)2. (C) Comment: While we do not know who is responsible, it is difficult to believe that the attack was unrelated to Nour's political activities. Since his unexpected release from prison in February, Nour has been politically active, traveled to Europe and been the subject of intense media attention, related to both his personal life (his estrangement from wife Gameela Ismail, his disbarment by Egypt's Lawyers Syndicate) and his criticism of the GoE. A close confident of Nour's, while not accusing the GoE of orchestrating the attack, noted that Nour had just announced his intention to run for president in 2011 and reminded us of the GoE's failure to take action against those responsible for the November 2008 attack on Al Ghad party headquarters (ref C).

The Attack

[¶](#)3. (C) According to Ihab Al Khouly, a leader of the Ayman Nour wing of opposition Al Ghad (Tomorrow) Party, a male teenager on a motorcycle pulled up next to Nour - who was walking in a business district in Cairo's Giza area - and sprayed Nour with flames from an ignited aerosol insecticide can, burning Nour's face and scalp. Al Khouly noted that those responsible for the attack on Al Ghad party headquarters also used ignited aerosol cans.

[¶](#)4. (C) Al Khouly said Nour did not file a police report because the authorities took no action against those responsible for the arson attack on Al Ghad headquarters last November, thereby sending a message that attacks on Al Ghad figures will go unpunished. Al Khouly refused to speculate on responsibility for the attack and cautioned that much of the press coverage of the attack was inaccurate.

GoE Response

15. (C) On May 26, we discussed the attack with Ministry of Foreign Affairs Deputy Director of Human Rights Omar Shalaby and urged the GoE to take appropriate steps to protect Nour and investigate the attack. Shalaby responded that Nour's protection is a "national priority." He lamented that Nour had not filed a police report after the attack, which Shalaby said would make an investigation and prosecution more difficult. Nonetheless, Shalaby said that he believes an investigation is underway. The Ambassador will raise the attack and Nour's security with higher levels of the GoE.

SCOBED